



Military English

Lesson: Radio Communications (RATEL) – Radio Checks [listening]

TEACHER'S COPY

Overview:

This lesson covers vocabulary needed to conduct a radio check.

In this lesson, you will

- ✓ listen to a training session and learn the meaning of new words
- ✓ practise listening skills
- ✓ use new words in conversations.

Teacher's notes are indicated by this: **TN →**

TN → RATEL stands for radiotelephone. It refers to the voice communication system used over radio networks, typically in tactical environments. In this lesson, it is defined as 'radio communication(s)', which is a simpler way to define it.

Prepare for Listening

1) Look at some pictures from today's listening. Work in a small group and discuss the questions.

TN → Give students (Ss) 3-4min to discuss the questions (Qs). Monitor and if you notice some good conversations, note the groups having them for feedback (FB). For FB, ask individual Ss for their answers (ans) – if you noted some good responses to the Qs, call on those Ss to give their ans. EXTENSION TASK – give Ss 1min to write down as many words as they know that are used in military radio conversations. First, elicit one or two from the class, so they know what you want from them (e.g. 'over', 'roger'). Then ask for a few words from the class and write them on the board for later – see '**TN →**' below task 11.

- a. Do you have to use a radio at work?
- b. Do you ever speak on the radio in English?
- c. What is easy about it? What is harder?
- d. Have you ever had any training about being on the radio? What did you learn about?



Listening

2)  Listen to the instructor. What is the main idea of the training?

TN → Ask the class one Q at a time and elicit ans: 1. What is happening in the picture? (an instructor is teaching a lesson/training some soldiers); 2. What do you see in the picture? (ans will vary, but expect these: an instructor, soldiers (from the Australian and Philippine Army), RATEL equipment (radios, antennas, cables, etc). Make sure the Ss have the chance to discuss the image, as it will set the context for the listening. Now, tell Ss they will listen to an instructor talking at a radio communication lesson. Tell them they will listen and circle the correct main idea below. Tell them it's not important to understand all the words – all they need now is to get the main idea (gist). Play the recording, give a few seconds for Ss to answer, then ask them to check their ans with a partner. Now, elicit the ans from the class. The text is about radio checks, which is a quick and very common procedure in RATEL. Basically, a radio check is done in order to make sure everyone in that frequency can hear each other.

How to keep your radios clean and safe.

How to know that the radio is working.

How to be polite on the radio.

3) Listen again and circle the correct answers.

TN → Before you play the recording again, ask Ss to try and answer the Qs. Give Ss 3-4min to do this. Play the recording once and ask Ss to check their ans with a partner. Play a second time if necessary. Then elicit ans from the class. Ans are highlighted in the text on page 8 and match the colours below.

1. Soldiers do radio checks to

- a. **make sure everyone understands the message.**
- b. tell the others when a soldier is hurt.
- c. fix broken radios.
- d. make sure the batteries are charged.

2. Circle one of the first things you do in a radio check.

- a. Say 'loud and clear'.
- b. Make sure everyone is quiet.
- c. **Turn your radio on to the correct channel.**
- d. Ask if the call signs are correct.

3. Which phrase is 'Lima Charlie'?

- a. Long and clear.
- b. **Loud and Clear.**
- c. Lost and Clear.
- d. Love and Clear.

4. RATEL (radio communication) in the

Australian Defence Force is

- a. always done in the same way.
- b. **not done in the same way.**
- c. decided by the Commanding Officer.
- d. done through a phone.



Learning Military Vocabulary

4) The words in **bold** in the text are important military vocabulary that you should learn to use. Match the military words on the left to their definitions on the right on tables one to three. Look at the example.

TN → Ask Ss to look at the example. Explain: 1. match the words in bold on the left with the definition on the right; 2. the tables are separate so the ans for table one are only in table one. Give Ss 10 mins. It's important to monitor. Go around the class and randomly check Ss' ans. If they're incorrect, just say they're incorrect and let them work out the mistake. Give Ss more time if necessary. Then ask them to check with a partner. After this, ask individual Ss to give ans to the whole class, one S per ans.

Table one

<u>radio checks</u>	d	a. this is the end of the exchange
<u>transmissions</u>	f	b. I have finished speaking – your turn
<u>channel</u>	g	c. I hear you
<u>call signs</u>	e	d. (n) what radio users do to make sure their transmissions are strong and clear
<u>this is</u>	h	e. (n) a name or number given to a person or a unit to identify them on the radio e.g. "Romeo 2" or "Charlie 1 "
<u>over</u>	b	f. (n) the messages sent over the radio
<u>roger</u>	c	g. (n) a frequency that a group of people use to talk to each other on a radio – similar to a phone line for your team
<u>out</u>	a	h. I am _____

Table two

<u>loud and clear</u>	j	i. radio communications; talking on the radio
<u>broken but readable</u>	l	j. I can hear you with no problems
<u>nothing heard</u>	m	k. the radio isn't working – we should try something different
<u>broken and unreadable</u>	o	l. I can understand you, but the sound isn't very clear
<u>improve your means</u>	n	m. maybe you can hear me, but I can't hear you
<u>switch to alternative</u>	k	n. do something to make the signal better like moving the antenna or moving to a new place
<u>RATEL</u>	i	o. I can hear you but the sound is bad and I can't understand you

5) Listen and check.

6) Now let's practise saying the words. Listen and repeat.

TN → This stage acts like concept checking questions (CCQs) but is a little more fun. Put Ss into small groups and get each group to make their own buzzer sound. This could be clapping or hitting the table or

stamp their feet. Tell Ss to make a team name with their group and write these on the board. Tell Ss that you are going to give them a clue, and the first team to use their “buzzer”, hear their name called, and answer correctly gets a point. 1. You talk to everyone on the radio to make sure they can hear each other (radio check); 2. A word with a similar meaning to ‘frequency’ (channel); 3. Your ‘name’ when you talk on the radio (call sign); 3. You say this to let the other know it’s the end of what you wanted to say (over); 4. What you say at the end of the conversation (out); 5. You say this to let the others know you can hear them well (loud and clear / Lima Charlie / L&C); 6. I can hear you, but can’t understand what you’re saying (broken and unreadable); 7. I can’t hear you well, but I can still understand what you’re saying (broken but readable); 8. I understand what you said (roger); 9. I can’t really understand you, so try to do something different (improve your means).

Practice

7) Complete these radio conversations with the new words from exercise 3.



Conversation 1

C12, this is C11. Radio Check. Over.

C11, this is C12, loud and clear. Over.

C12 this is C11. Roger. Out.

TN → Give Ss 5-10min to do this. With weaker Ss, ask them to work in pairs.

For FB, ask Ss to check with a partner, but don’t give ans at this time – this will be done in task 8.

Conversation 2

40, all call signs. Radio check. Over.

41, loud and clear. Over.

42,

43, loud and clear. Over.

40. 41, 43, out to you. 42, radio check. Over.

42, broken but readable. Over.

40, 42, roger. 40, out.

Conversation 3

40, 41. Radio check. Over.

.....

40 this is 41. Radio check. Over.

.....

40 this is 41. Nothing heard. Out.

Conversation 4

40 this is 42C. Radio check. Over.

42C this is 40. You are broken and unreadable, Switch to alternate. Over.

40 this is 42C. Roger. Out

...some time later...

40 this is 42C. Radio check. Over.

42C this is 40. Loud and clear. Over

40 this is 42C. Loud and clear. Out.

Conversation 5

40 this is 42C. Radio check. Over.

42C this is 40. You are broken and unreadable, say words twice. Over.

40 this is 42C, 40 this is 42C. Radio check. Radio check. Over.

42C this is 40. You are broken and unreadable. Improve your means. Over.

40 this is 42C. Roger. Out.

8) Listen and check.

9) Practise the conversations with your partners. **TN →** note that conversation 2 will involve three Ss, so ask Ss to work in groups of 3 – they can take turns with the other conversations. This is an accuracy task, so while monitoring, correct any mispronunciations.

10) Practise radio checks with a partner. Your teacher will give you a card that tells you how you can hear your partner on the radio e.g. well, not well, not at all. Take turns being the caller. Be ready to perform your radio check for the class!

TN → This is a freer practice task. Print and cut up the bits on page seven, one per S.

TN → Tell Ss they will work in pairs, taking turns to be the caller (Ask 'Is the caller the person making or receiving the call?' [ans: making the call / asking for the radio check]). Show the first two matching cards – with a grenade – on the screen for all to see.

Explain the information on the cards (they show a symbol at the top, S's and their partner's call signs, and, for when they receive the call, how they can hear them e.g. well, not well, not at all).

Tell Ss we say call sign numbers as individual numbers, and the letters are from the NATO Phonetic Alphabet e.g. 30A is three-zero Alfa, not thirty-one A. Write on the board 'call sign 21B'.

Ask 'How do I say this call sign?' (two-one Bravo, not twenty-one B). Do a demonstration with a strong S in front of the class. The conversation will go something like this:

First conversation:	Second conversation:
A: Four-one, this is four-zero, radio check. Over.	A: Four-zero, this is four-one. Radio check. Over.
B: Four-zero, this is four-one. Broken but readable. Over.	B: Four-one, this is four-zero. Loud and clear. Over.
A: Four-one, this is four-zero. Roger. Out.	A: Four-zero, this is four-one. Roger. Out.

Ask Ss to look at the examples. While they're doing this, hand out the cards so that two Ss sitting next to each other have the same symbol on their cards (= the matching cards). If you have an odd number of Ss, ask one group of three to take turns.

Now tell Ss that their partner has to have the same symbol on the card (a grenade, a helicopter, a plane, a ship or a tank).

Ask these ICQs: 1. Do you and your partner have the same symbol on your cards? (they should all say yes!); 2. Can you show your card to your partner during the conversation? (no); 2. Are you going to try to use the new words you learned today? (yes).

Give them 5-10min. If you have time, ask Ss to swap cards with another pair so they get more practice.

Example one:

One-zero, this is one-one, radio check, over.

One-one, this is one-zero, loud and clear, over.

One-zero, this is one-one, roger, out.

Example two:

One-three alfa, this is four-one alfa, radio check, over.

Four-one alfa, this is one-three alfa, broken but readable, over.

Four-one alfa, roger. Out.

11) Listen to your partners perform their radio check. Make notes. Whose radios are working?

TN → Call 3-4 pairs to perform in front of the class the radio checks they practised in task ten. Ask the rest of the class to pay attention and decide if the pairs' radios are working or not. After each conversation, ask the class "Was their radio working ok?" (ans will depend on each case).

TN → If you wrote some words related to RATEL on the board in task one, ask Ss to read the words on the board and tell which ones they learned in this lesson. If there are any that were not included in this lesson, then it's a sign they have good knowledge of RATEL terminology. If that is the case, praise the class! ☺

- You will watch a video of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) helping the Vanuatu police with RATEL training. Type on YouTube [ADF Radio Operators train Vanuatu Police](#) or scan the QR code. →



TN → You can either play this video at the end of the lesson or set it for homework. Ask Ss to read the Qs before watching it. For FB ask Ss to check ans with a partner, then ask random Ss for the ans.

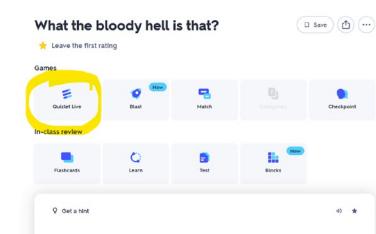
Watch the video and decide if these statements are true or false. Also make a note of any other RATEL vocabulary you want to learn.

- a. They are learning about one type of radio system. F – the Vanuatu Police Force are learning to use two models
- b. They only learn in the classroom. F – in classroom and in-field (outside) training
- c. This is the first time they are doing this kind of training. T – 'We haven't had this training before'
- d. The Vanuatu police think the training is important. T – 'the long term importance that this training holds for them'

- For more practice with the words you've learned here, scan the QR code for a set of Quizlet flashcards. You can do some more study on the vocab in this lesson on your own with these. →



TN → If you have time left over, and your Ss have phones with internet play Quizlet live to consolidate the lesson. You will need to be logged into Quizlet for you to start the game as a teacher. Otherwise, you **cannot** see the icon. Here is a video on how the game works - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q64qTBfKOiE>



TN → If you don't want to play Quizlet live (or if you don't have the internet) there are many other games you could play to round off the lesson such as *Back to the Board*. Instructions here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7j-2xteKB4> (I know the video is kids, but it works for all ages, I promise!). Alternatively, set this for homework. Either way, tell Ss to visit this Quizlet page every 2-3 weeks to revise.

- This lesson links with: Lesson – Radio Communications (RATEL) – Listening Vocabulary Builder – Phonetic Alphabet

Tasks 9 and 10

(images below from flaticon.com)



Your partner's call sign is 41 (four-one).
Your call sign is 40.

You can hear your partner well.



Your partner's call sign is 40 (four-zero).
Your call sign is 41.

You can't hear your partner well, but
you can understand him/her.



Your partner's call sign is
31B (three-one Bravo).
Your call sign is 30B.

You can hear your partner well.



Your partner's call sign is
30B (three-zero Bravo).
Your call sign is 31B.

You can't hear anything!



Your partner's call sign is
41A (four-one Alfa).
Your call sign is 40A.

You can't hear your partner well. Ask
him/her to try something different.



Your partner's call sign is
40A (four-zero Alfa).
Your call sign is 41A.

You can hear your partner, but you can't
understand him/her.



Your partner's call sign is
20D (two-zero Delta).
Your call sign is 21D.

You can't hear your partner well. Ask
him/her to try to make the signal better.



Your partner's call sign is
21D (two-one Delta).
Your call sign is 20D.

You can't hear your partner well, but
you can understand him/her.



Your partner's call sign is
30C (three-zero Charlie).
Your call sign is 31C.

You can't hear your partner well. Ask
him/her to try something different.



Your partner's call sign is
31C (three-one Charlie).
Your call sign is 30C.

You can hear your partner well.

Transcript 1

SOUNDS OF STUDENTS CHATTING

Alright. Alright. Settle down you lot.

Today we're gunna talk about **radio checks**. Anyone know why we do radio checks? No?

We do radio checks to make sure our **transmissions**, so that's **our messages, are strong and clear**. Radio checks are very important. Imagine waiting until the enemy is attacking or until someone gets hurt before you realise that the radio isn't working!

The first thing you have to do is make sure your **radio is on and you are on the right channel**. If your radio has been quiet for a while, it is always a good idea to double check this.

The basic radio check is always the same. If there are 2 people on the radio, so that's just 2 **call signs**, and everyone can hear each other well, the conversation will sound something like this:

40 **this is** 41. Radio check. **Over**

41 this is 40. **Roger**. Over.

40 this is 41. Roger. **Out**

**PAUSE TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO LOOK AT THE SECOND SET OF WORDS **

If everything is fine, you will hear "Roger", **loud and clear**, or sometimes Lima Charlie for "L&C". Remember that "Roger" means "I hear you".

That's if everything is fine. But what if it isn't? Well, if you can't hear very well, but you can still understand, you can say "**broken but readable**". Another thing you might hear is "**Nothing heard**" if you can't hear anything. Sometimes you, may hear a few words, but not enough to understand the conversation. When this happens we say **broken and unreadable**. This is usually for the person who called for the radio check.

So it would go:

40 this is 41. Radio check. Over.

40 this is 41. Radio check. Over.

40 this is 41. Nothing heard. Out.

They might also say "**Improve your means**". They say this when they can't hear you well because the signal is weak. You might need to move the antenna, or move to a better location so they can hear you more clearly. "**Switch to alternative**" is for when things are bad. It means "Try something different". For example, you might need to call on the satellite phone.

Remember. **Each part of the Australian military does RATEL**, that is radio communications, a little differently.

Always ask your CO if you are not sure.